# BASKETRY AND WEAVING

BY

KATHERINE PASCH

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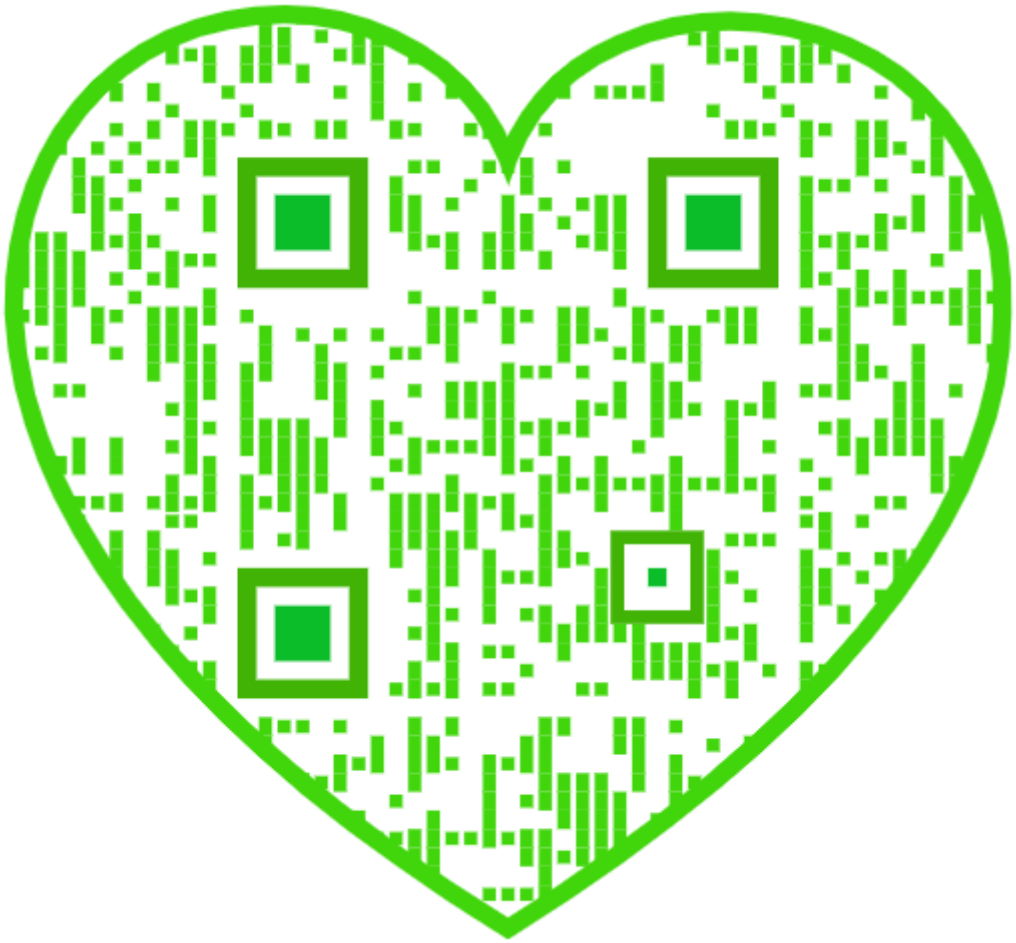

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# Basketry and Weaving

## *In the School*

BY
KATHARINE PASCH
Springfield, Illinois

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A. FLANAGAN COMPANY

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# BASKETRY AND WEAVING

## IN THE SCHOOL

In the last decade, it has been demonstrated beyond question that industrial art may be introduced into the schools without in the least lessening their efficiency in intellectual training. Its introduction awakens the interest of pupils who have special need of being interested, and it is helpful to both teacher and child. By it the home and the school are brought into closer relations.

The child, in his early years, has the tendencies of primitive man. In his play he imagines himself a savage far away from civilization. He builds fires in the open air and hunts imaginary wild animals that roam in imaginary forests. He has not been told of the cave dwellers who passed through the fishing, hunting and pastoral stages, yet within him is the longing for a life like theirs.

Intellectual training pursued along this line of interest, beginning with the study of primitive man and leading up to the present conditions, will take the child out into the industrial world, and he will be made to feel that a place is awaiting him in it which he will fill later on.

He is also made to feel that work is honorable and labor is to be respected.

The needs of the home furnish many interesting topics for language work, number work and geography.

The first needs were food, clothing and shelter. Primitive

man supplied the first of these by fishing and hunting. The grasses, bark and skins of animals lent themselves to the rude construction of his clothing and shelter.

Undoubtedly the first vessels used by man were shells and gourds. Later he made receptacles of clay. In order more conveniently to carry these, a rude sort of twisted netting was made. The clay broke easily, and he found that the netted cover still served him. He gradually improved upon this, and different forms of baskets were the result. From this crude beginning there has grown up through the ages an art that to-day supplies us with necessities and luxuries. Indeed, if we were to eliminate woven products from our homes, in the form of carpets, rugs, curtains, linen and clothing, we should have little left of our boasted civilization.

In his early school life the child contrasts the simple building, weaving and home life of early days with the complex building, weaving and life of to-day. He constructs miniature huts, spins and weaves wool for miniature garments and models clay dishes. He is taught to observe nature as did early man, who depended upon the seasons to furnish his food supply. He must know when to sow the seed and how to harvest and store it. When he wishes to dye his weaving materials, he must go to nature for his colors.

In searching for materials, the child is taken to the heart of Africa, where he finds the natives constructing their homes and clothing from the fiber of the palm. He becomes more interested in geography, and is enabled to form more perfect images of the people of other lands and their occupations. He also learns of the struggle of mankind to supply his needs.

As he is interested, language will come to him and he will delight in telling his own experience. When he feels that he

is taking part in the work of the world, a self-respect is put into him and he becomes more useful. His activity, which heretofore ran riot, is now directed; he becomes one of a community and his wish is to make himself useful and have his work appreciated. The boy who was once a trial in school often becomes his teacher's helper.

Some one has said, "Accidental manual training has been the cause of civilization," as it was by accident that primitive man discovered his ability to construct.

The making of one utensil often suggested the possibility of others. As his wants became more numerous he set about the task of supplying them.

Hand work is found to have quickened the faculties, and an awakening to situations has been the result.

The grade teacher may think there is no time or place on her program for this work; but when she takes it up in the true spirit it is not a thing by itself. It becomes a part of every lesson in the school. Basketry and weaving are the best forms of industrial training, as they are adaptable to any school grade, and the materials are easily handled and inexpensive.

The baskets themselves, or the woven articles, have very little value; but the training of the hand, the searching for materials, the study of the needs of the home, and the supplying of these needs, all tend to make geography and history more real to the child. A greater interest in the home is awakened by the making of furniture and rugs from raffia or raveled-out matting.

Education to-day demands that manual training be given a place in the work of the school.

Will such training not make the children more fully co-operate with the world's work?

## MATERIALS

To the teacher who thinks of doing basketry and weaving, the question of materials may seem rather a formidable one. However, if she pursue the work with vigor and interest, the supply will be surprisingly easy to obtain. Raveled-out matting and ingrain carpets, yarns of every kind, silkoline and muslin are some of the materials at hand. Raffia and reeds may be purchased at any of the large seed stores.

The raffia, which is a product of the Madagascar palm, is rich in possibilities. It comes in large hanks and costs twenty-five to forty cents a pound.

Picture frames, boxes, mats, shopping-bags, hats for dolls and people, hammocks and baskets are some of the articles which may be made from this material.

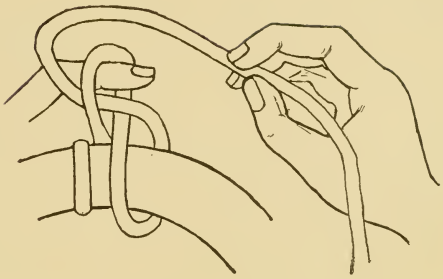
Even the grasses from the fields and the willows from the creek may be put to good use. The only tools required are knives, scissors and needles.

## BRAIDING

In all the work have the children strive for perfection. Do not accept poorly braided or half-sewed articles. Criticize in the kindest manner, as harsh criticism will kill the enthusiasm. Praise when it is possible—not extravagantly, but justly.

Very small children may be taught braiding and knotting. Teach first the three-strand braid, using two or three threads in each strand. The raffia may be braided dry, or kept moist by plunging in water, as one prefers. The strands should be brought over to the sides and pressed firmly each time, to keep the braid flat. Secure the knotted end with a tack to the under side of a desk or window sill, and keep the work fast-

I



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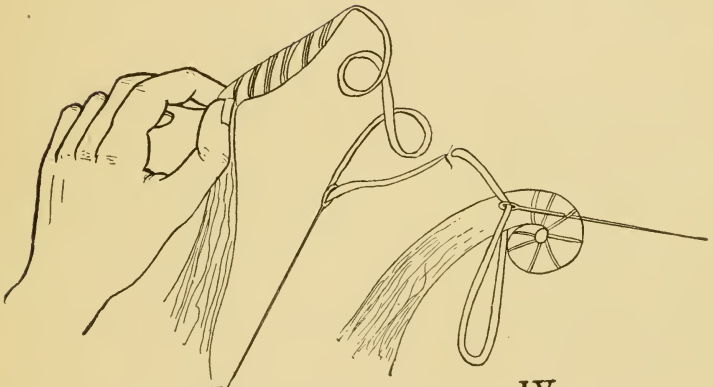

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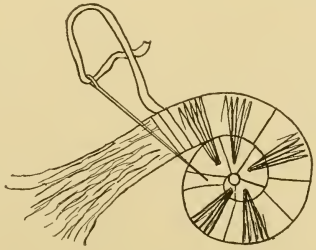


V

ened about a foot from where you are braiding. When the strands become thin, replenish them by simply laying in new strands of the raffia. Braid these in without any attempt at concealing the ends, which may be left out an inch or so at the side. Afterward, cut off these ends carefully, close to the braid, and no trace is left of their entrance.

This braid may be made into napkin rings, picture frames, mats, bags or doll-hats. It may be sewed with the flat sides together, or edge to edge. Use a tapestry needle threaded with raffia, and sew through the loops of the braid, hiding the stitches as much as possible.

### TO MAKE A DOLL-HAT

Have the children draw pictures of simple shapes of hats. Fold a piece of paper and cut out the hat pattern the desired size and shape, as in Fig. I. The opening in the paper serves as the pattern into which the material may be fitted. The shapes may vary. Some might have a rounded crown and a brim turning up. Others might take on the shape of the Mexican sombrero. Begin at the center of the crown to sew the braid in a circle.

### PICTURE FRAME

Make a circle of cardboard and cut out the center, leaving a two-inch margin. Tie the raffia on the back of the cardboard, bring up the thread and make a loop over the finger and around the cardboard and under, coming up on the back and through the loop. Pull down gently and you have a buttonhole stitch, as in Fig. II. Continue this stitch until the cardboard is covered. Or the same shaped cardboard may be

simply wrapped over and over with the raffia that has been moistened to make it smoother.

### BASKETS

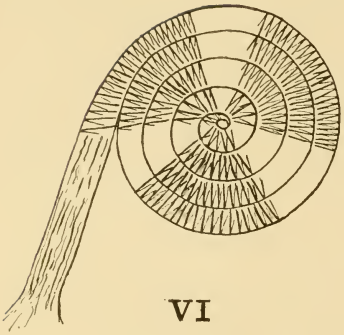
Baskets are of two kinds, sewed and woven. Three-strand braids of raffia make the simplest of the sewed baskets. Begin to sew in the center of the bottom and sew around in a circle or an oblong. In shaping for the sides, place the braid on the top of the last row in the bottom. A little experience in sewing will enable one to make beautifully curved baskets with these braids. The coiled baskets require material to form a rope over which we sew with a thread of raffia. For the rope or filling, one may use rattan, which makes a firm, hard filling, but is too difficult for beginners to handle.

The raffia makes a very good filling, as do binding twine and small cotton rope.

Splints and rattan are used for the woven baskets. The rattan is a pliable reed which comes in sizes numbering from one to six.

### SEWED BASKETS

Fig. III shows the manner of beginning the sewed basket. Select the large ends of twelve or fifteen strands of raffia to form the rope. Begin about an inch from the end with a threaded strand of raffia, and wrap the strands until the end is reached. Then turn the coil on itself, and put the needle directly through the twisted coil and sew securely through the rope as shown in Fig. IV. Then wind the rope with the threaded strand for about the fourth of an inch; sew again through the rope, being careful to keep the stitches pointing toward the center, as in Fig. V. The firmer the coils are



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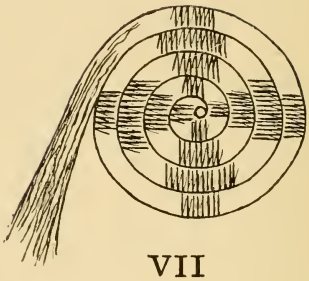

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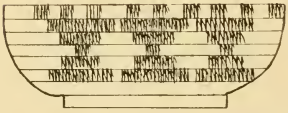

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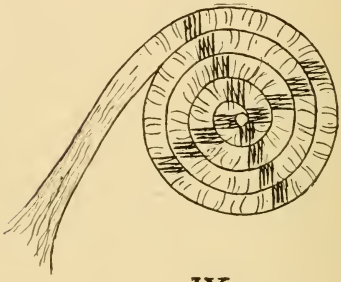

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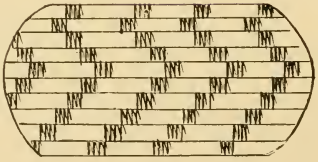


X

wound and the closer the stitches are placed, the stronger will be the basket.

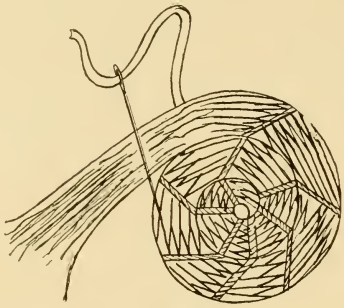
This stitch may be varied by passing the needle over and between the coils instead of through them. When the threaded strand becomes short, allow it to drop into the rope, and take up a new one for a short distance to hold it; then sew as before. When the strands of the rope grow smaller, add a few more threads at a time and wind carefully to conceal the ends.

Don't delay introducing designs in color, as it adds to the beauty and makes the work more fascinating. To make the design in the bottom of the basket, begin in the first or second round and mark with colored thread the divisions of the circle. (Fig. VI.) Drop the threaded strand and, taking the colored raffia, wind and sew the desired distance. Then drop the colored strand and use the natural color from the rope until the next space for color is reached, when you again pick up the colored raffia and sew in the design, continuing in this way until the design is complete. When the sides are reached, divide into spaces for color, and work in a simple design. (Fig. VIII.)

A simple design for the bottom of a basket is shown in Fig. VII. Fig. IX shows a pattern that might serve for the bottom, and the same idea is carried out for the sides in Fig. X.

*Coil stitch:*—Take strands for a rope, as in Fig. III, and wind the same as for the first basket until the first coil is made. The threaded strand should be colored for this stitch, as the radiation of the colored thread makes the pattern. Keep the rope well twisted, and with the threaded strand coil over and into the center of the rope until one round is completed. Then around the twisted rope—held firmly against that already

sewed—wrap the colored strand in a loose coil and insert the needle each time at the right of the stitch as in Fig. XI.

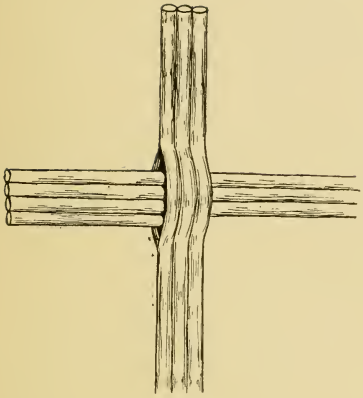


**XI**

*Chain stitch*:—When this stitch is carefully done it has the appearance of a crocheted cord. Begin the coil as in Fig. III, and wrap about four times before taking a stitch through the coil. (Fig. IV.) There should be about six or eight of these sewed stitches in the second round. Let the raffia come across as broad as it will, as it is in this thread that the next stitch will be taken, splitting the thread to insert the needle. (Fig. XXII.) If the stitches become so far apart as not to hold the coil firmly, add new stitches in the space. Color may be used in this basket with pretty effects.

### WOVEN BASKETS

For these rattan is the most desirable, though cane and Indian splints may be used. The spokes should be at least two grades coarser than the weaver. Nos. 4 and 2 make a firm basket, or 3 and 1 for finer weaving. For a small basket, cut eight spokes about sixteen inches long and one spoke nine



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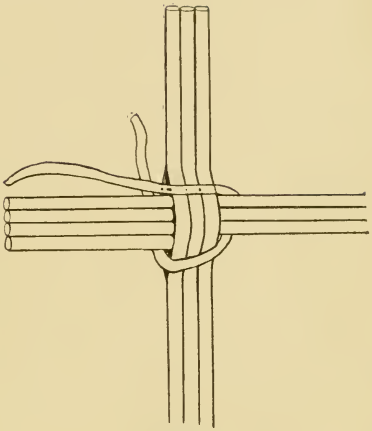

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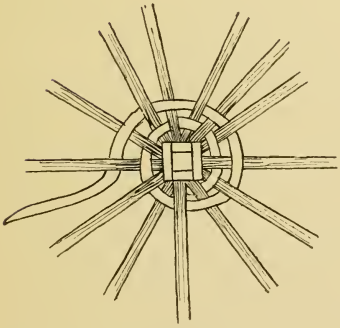
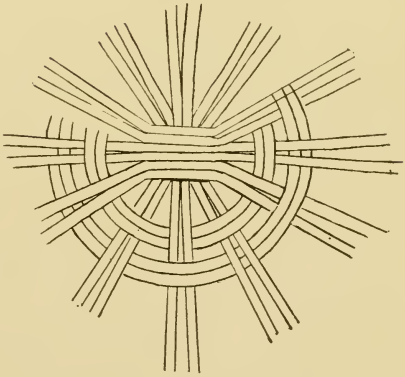


XIV



XV

inches in length. This is to make the number of spokes uneven, as you will learn that the over and under weaving cannot be done on an even number of spokes.

After soaking these spokes in lukewarm water until pliable, split four of them in the center far enough to allow the others to be inserted. (Fig. XII.)

Now take a long strand of raffia and wrap firmly around the spokes where they cross. (Fig. XIII.) Then weave over one and under one, over one, under one, until about an inch in diameter. (Fig. XIV.) The pliable raffia gives a closer, firmer weave than it would be possible to obtain with rattan. In bringing the threads around the spoke, they should be drawn down tightly. This is best done by holding the spoke firmly between the thumb and forefinger of the left hand, while with the right hand the thread or weaver is drawn directly in a line across the center.

The rattan for weavers should be soaked at least half an hour before any attempt is made to use it, and if it shows signs of splitting, leave it in the water until it is more pliable.

Weave from left to right. To finish off the top edge, the ends of the spokes may be disposed of in several ways. The writer left this for the children to solve. They soon discovered that it would not do to cut the spokes off, and the result of their thinking was a border resembling Fig. XVI. A firmer edge may be made by taking one spoke and placing it back of the one next, and in front of the next two spokes, allowing the end to come on the inside of the basket. Treat each spoke in this way, pressing them down firmly.

If curved sides are desired, the curving upward is done very gradually. If you wish straight sides, soak the spokes well, and turn up sharply. To make a large basket, split half the

reeds as for the smaller basket. The spokes may be separated into groups of two for several rounds, as in Fig. XV. Then begin the over and under weaving around each spoke.

### RATTAN MATS

Table mats may be made of the rattan, using six or eight spokes with the half spoke and keeping the weaving flat. Allow four or five inches on the ends of the spokes to fold back to form the border. (Fig. XVI.)

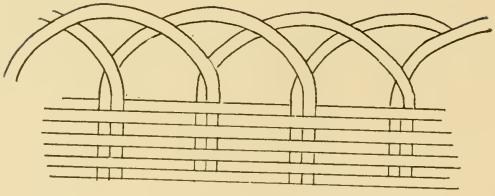
### SIMPLE ROUND BASKET

Use for the bottom a heavy pasteboard. Cut out the circle about three inches in diameter, and pierce with nine holes about one-fourth of an inch from the edge of the cardboard. Take four pieces of No. 4 reed about fourteen inches long. After soaking, put the ends of the spokes through each pair of perforations, making a loop on the under side. (Fig. XVII.) There will be one hole remaining. Into this put a spoke about eight inches long, and allow the end to be put alongside a neighboring spoke. Use No. 3 reed for the weaver, and weave about three or four inches high. (Fig. XVIII.) Fasten down the ends of spokes as shown in Fig. XIX. An oval piece of cardboard may be used in this basket to vary the shape.

Fig. XX shows a basket with straight sides.

### BOWL-SHAPED WOVEN BASKET.

Use eight spokes of No. 4 rattan sixteen inches long, and one nine inches long. After four of the spokes have been split and the others inserted, wind the center with raffia until about one inch in diameter. Then take a soaked weaver of finer



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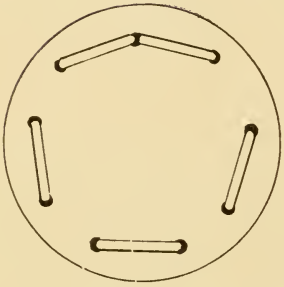

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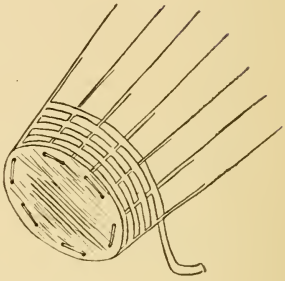

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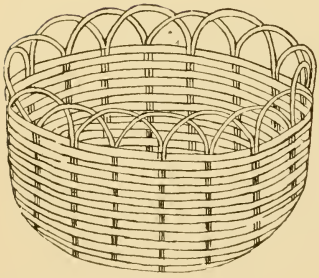

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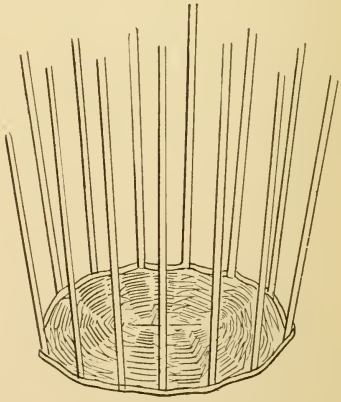


XX

number and weave over and under, until the sides are reached, when the spokes should be gently turned upward and outward.

This basket may be woven about five inches high. The spokes should be well woven in at the top to give greater firmness.

A twisted handle may be put on this basket. Take a No. 4 reed long enough to insert in each side and extend over the top. A weaver is then made fast on one side under the last few rows, twisted around the heavy reed to the other side, and fastened. Return to the opposite side with this same weaver, allowing it to twist around the other that was brought over, and fasten down the end under the weaving at the side of the basket.

Much has been said about originality in this work. But rather than let the children work without any definite aim in view, we had better resort to the mechanical pattern. Figs. XXIV and XXV show a folded paper with cut-out basket patterns. Into this the sewed material may be fitted. The cut-out piece serves as the pattern on which the design is placed to guide in the use of color.

For the bottom of the basket a circular paper serves as the pattern. On this draw the design as in Fig. VII. Much depends upon the choice of color. It is better to use few colors in the beginning—one color with the natural raffia making a very nice basket. Avoid the use of many brilliant hues in one basket. Study carefully the colored Indian basket, and you will observe that in them there is no promiscuous mixture of colors.

Let the use of the basket determine somewhat the shape. It may be that we wish it for mama's sewing table. If so, we want it to be such a shape as to hold articles found there.

Or we may want a pencil basket. Here again, the use will suggest the shape.

Have no work done that will not serve a good purpose.

### WEAVING ON LOOMS

The loom for this work may be purchased from the publishers of this book. A simple loom may be constructed of four small strips of wood, fastened at the corners. Place small-headed nails, one-fourth of an inch apart, on each of the ends, around which the warp is placed. A very simple loom may also be made from a square or oblong of cardboard, by making slits in each end through which the warp is placed.

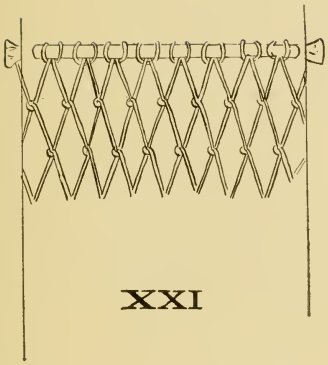
A kindergarten needle for paper weaving may be used to draw the material through, over and under the warp, always leaving the end in the weaving, instead of out on the edge.

### WASH-CLOTH

Take strips of cheesecloth or candle wicking, and after stringing the loom with white carpet warp, weave over and under till the cloth is completed, making it square. Cut out from the frame and tie the warp ends securely.

### DOLL-BLANKET

For this use any kind of yarn. The warp may be of cotton. Make it the full size of the loom, which is about ten by twelve inches. A very pretty border may be made by alternating threads of different color and weaving over and under two threads.



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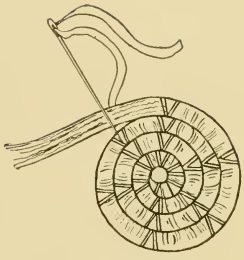

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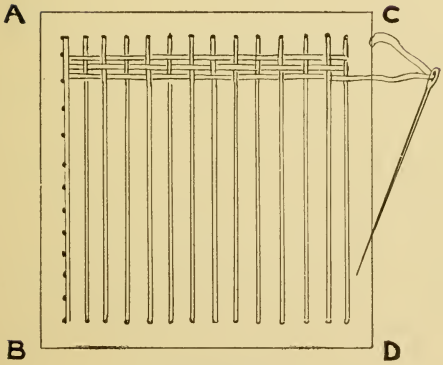



XXIII

KNOT FOR BAG

### RAFFIA RUG

Use cotton warp, and weave with strands of raffia that have been moistened, using colored raffia for the design.

### DOLL-SKIRT

Cut out of pasteboard a flat pattern the size and length desired, allowing the top to be narrower than the bottom. (Fig. XXVII.) On these edges place notches one-fourth of an inch apart. Place the warp over around the notches and down the side, until one side is covered with warp; then wind the other side in like manner. Begin at the top with the plain over and under weave and complete in this way.

### IRON-HOLDER

Use cardboard for a loom. Draw a six-inch square and place perforations on three sides, one-fourth of an inch apart. Use heavy yarn; that known as wool roving is best.

Begin at A (Fig. XXIII), string the warp over both sides, then begin to weave on line A B, weaving across to line C D, then back again and through the perforation on the other side, weaving across and back to the perforations and through on the front. Continue this until the warp is entirely filled.

The line C D is left open. Take out the cardboard and sew up the open side and you have a very useful holder for irons or a coffee pot.

### HOUSE FURNISHINGS, ETC.

Build a miniature house and have the children furnish it, folding paper furniture, weaving yarn, raffia and cotton rugs

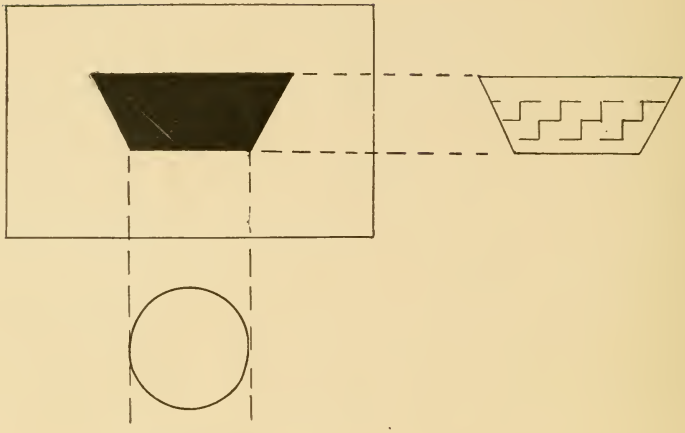
for the floors, hemming curtains for the windows and covers for the tables, and painting pictures for the walls.

In the first grade, for a basis of language work, take primitive life. Beginning with the cave dwellers, lead the children through the fishing, hunting and pastoral stages. The teacher will find a most helpful book for this work in "The Place of Industries in Elementary Education," by Katharine Dopp. (University of Chicago Press.) Give the work in story form, allowing the children to do all handwork in connection with the progress of early man. The cave may be built on the sand table. The grass mats and clay dishes, the netted covers for the water jugs, and the spinning and weaving are forms of play to the child. The experience gained in this way is later transformed into knowledge.

### BOXES AND NAPKIN RINGS

Use the buttonhole stitch given for the photograph frame. (Fig. II.) Very pretty covered boxes may be easily made in this way: Take a circular piece of cardboard for the bottom, leaving a small opening in the center. After the circle is covered with the raffia, this hole may be neatly darned. For the sides take a strip of cardboard long enough to extend around the bottom, and cover it with the same buttonhole stitch. A top may then be made of several circles, gradually growing smaller, laid one on the other, each circle being completely covered with the buttonhole stitch before sewing together. Napkin rings, also, are made with this same stitch. Use a strip of cardboard about two inches wide and five or six inches long. Join, and cover with buttonhole stitch.

Square and oblong boxes may be made by taking pieces of cardboard the size and shape for each side and wrapping them



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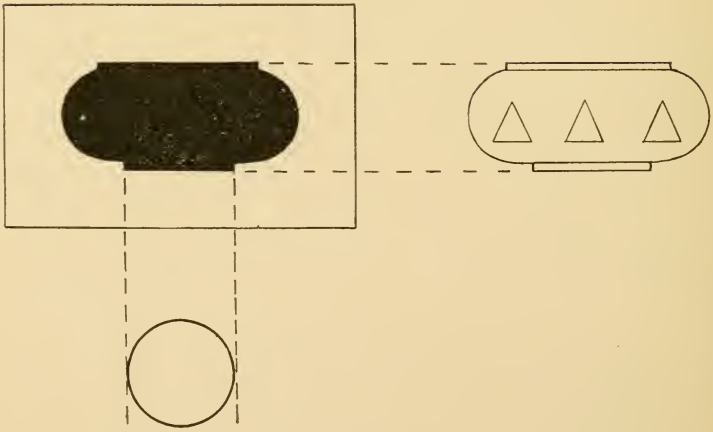


XXV

over and over with the raffia and afterward sewing them together with an overhand stitch.

### KNOTTED BAG OF RAFFIA

Cut twelve pieces of cord or raffia ten to fifteen inches long for a small bag. Take the cord in the middle and loop over a ruler. (Fig. XXI.) Take two strands, one from each of two loops, and tie in an ordinary knot, being careful to draw it into position before pulling down tightly. Be sure to keep the knots in a line across.

The bag should be lined with some soft material, and a drawstring put through the loops where the ruler has been. This will make a very pretty receptacle for small articles.

Doll hammocks may be made with the same knot, using a ring through which the strands are looped for the beginning. When the knotting ceases, fasten the ends in another ring. Large brass rings or small iron ones may be used for this purpose.

### COLORING OF MATERIAL

The Indians discovered that the forests would yield dye for their grasses and yarns. The oak bark gave them yellow, and the walnut hulls beautiful shades of brown. Some of their colors they obtained by burying the willows and grasses in a clay which contained certain minerals and which imparted to their materials lasting hues.

A knowledge of this will show the child how nature is our great storehouse, and that much thinking has brought about the perfection of color which we now behold in our weavings.

Why are Persian rugs so costly? We are told it is due to the careful dyeing. Not only once is their material dyed, but

several times. A beautiful softness of color is obtained in this way quite different from the effects secured by the use of the mineral dyes.

### SIMPLE RECIPES

Logwood will make any shade of brown, according to the amount used. Make a decoction of the extract, and steep ten or fifteen minutes. No prettier nor more artistic color than this is obtained from any dye.

For black, make a strong decoction of logwood extract and put in a few drops of blue vitriol, when the liquid will turn black. Soak the raffia in this until it is a dense black.

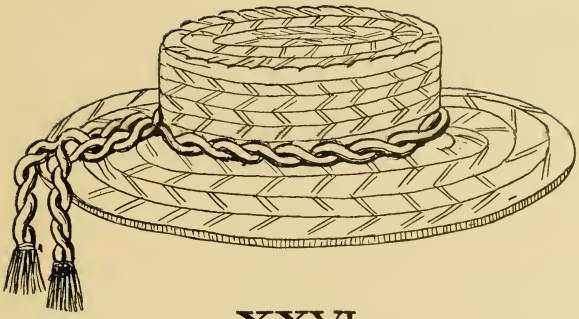
For most of the work, these colors are sufficient, and much more artistic than a combination of bright hues.

For red, soak the raffia in a solution of cream of tartar; then steep in a decoction of cochineal. The cream of tartar acts as a mordant.

All decoctions are formed by a solution of the dye-stuffs. Take the amount of water required to cover the material you wish to dye and enough coloring to make the desired shade.

To make yellow, soak the raffia in a solution of alum for about twelve hours. Make a solution of the amount of water required to cover the material, using an extract of fustic, until a good deep yellow is obtained. Heat this and put the raffia in; boil for ten or fifteen minutes, until the desired shade is obtained. After removing the material from the dye, always wash thoroughly to prevent the color from rubbing off.

In one school the children were encouraged to think for themselves as to how these colors were obtained. One little boy came to school with his hands stained with walnuts, and the thought occurred to him that perhaps he could dye some of



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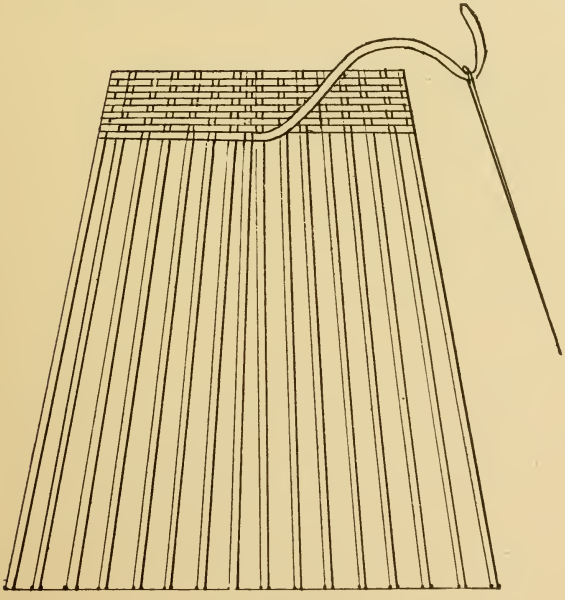

XXVII

the basket materials used by his class, which had been anxious to obtain color for designs. He was allowed to take the material home, and in a few days returned it a beautiful brown. No suggestions had been given as to how he should proceed, and he gladly gave a good oral language lesson, telling how he secured the color.

## Conclusion

The question has often been asked, "May children be taught to speak well?" A child will usually talk about that which interests him. What, then, are the child's interests during his early life? Study his activities at this time, and we find him as portrayed in the poem by Robert Louis Stevenson.

At evening when the lamp is lit,
Around the fire my parents sit;
They sit at home and talk and sing,
And do not play at anything.

Now, with my little gun, I crawl
All in the dark along the wall,
And follow round the forest track
Away behind the sofa back.

* * * * *

These are the hills, these are the woods,
These are my starry solitudes,
And there the river by whose brink
The roaring lions come to drink.

I see the others far away,
As if in firelit camp they lay,
And I, like to an Indian scout,
Around their party prowled about.

Picture to him the life he longs for, and allow him to live it in an ideal way. When he becomes familiar with his own environment, take him, in his imagination, to the homes of the cliff dwellers and North American Indians. No better subject could be found for reading material than accounts of their adventures.

Let him become familiar with the story of "Lolami, the Little Cliff Dweller," by Clara Kern Bayliss, and with "Indian Boyhood," by Charles Eastman.

Blankets may be woven, the cliff house built, baskets sewed and the tepee made of twigs and skins.

The pastoral and agricultural stages furnish material for study. Implements of all sorts suggest themselves in the study of the sheep and farming.

Later, colonial life should be considered, and the home shown as the workshop. Spinning, dyeing, carding and weaving were the chief industries. These should be studied and the conditions of the time noted. How much more real will the history of the country be when we contrast the home life of those times with that of to-day! "Home Life in Colonial Days," by Alice Morse Earle, will be a helpful book for this work.

Spindles, cards and looms may be made, and the wool spun, dyed and woven.

The value lies not in the articles themselves, but in the training the child receives from the work.

The things a child can make
May crude and worthless be,
It is his impulse to create
Should gladden thee.

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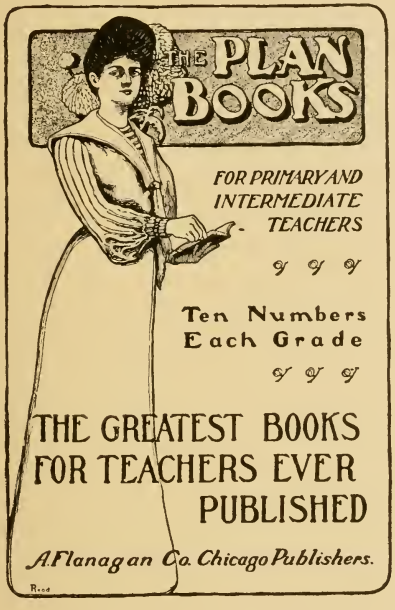
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